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Summary record of the 18th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 22 October 2003, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Chowdhury ..... (Bangladesh)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 95: Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/58/3 (Part I), A/58/210, A/58/204, A/58/337, A/58/362, A/C.2/58/5 and A/C.2/58/6)

Agenda item 94: Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/58/3 (Part I), A/58/170, A/58/303, A/58/304 and A/C.2/58/4)

1. **Mr. Aliyev** (Azerbaijan), speaking on behalf of Georgia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova (GUUAM), thanked the Secretariat for its reports on the implementation of Agenda 21 and for the texts that followed the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The GUUAM States had made sustainable development an integral part of their planning process. They were convinced that a balance had to be struck between social cohesion and governance, and between environmental protection and economic development. They hoped that the work of the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) would be fruitful and welcomed the substantive themes identified for the period 2004-2005. They also emphasized the input of the United Nations Regional Commissions and the United Nations Resident Coordinators to national assessment capacity-building regarding the implementation of sustainable development strategies.

2. As part to the follow-up to the Johannesburg Summit the Fifth Ministerial Conference entitled "Environment for Europe", which had been held under the auspices of the United Nations Commission for Europe (UNECE) in Kiev in May 2003, had adopted and opened for signature the following instruments: a new Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention), a new Protocol on Civil Liability and Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters to the UNECE Conventions on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Waters and International Lakes, and a new Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention). The GUUAM States reaffirmed their support for the Environmental Performance Review Programme of UNECE.

3. Given the urgency of poverty eradication, the issue of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production should remain in focus. It was necessary to succeed in changing these patterns and, to that end, special emphasis should be put on renewable energy sources.

4. The Governments of the GUUAM States had signed the Kyoto Protocol and become Parties to that instrument. They wished to emphasize the role of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in strengthening national capacities in the field of early warning. Greater attention should be paid to the effects of desertification and drought in connection with water management. In terms of food security, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) had played an important role in strengthening coordination among the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

5. It was necessary to bring the policies of sustainability closer to the citizens. Radical and decisive changes required openness, diversified approaches, and participation of all stakeholders. The GUUAM States backed partnerships between governments, the private sector, networks of non-governmental organizations and the scientific community - internally as well as internationally.

6. Given the globalization and the expansion of international trade, it was important to have clear and harmonized rules of fair trade. The unfortunate failure of the Cancun negotiations made a resumption of the Doha round even more urgent. The GUUAM group believed that the commitments made to strengthening an equitable multilateral system had been sincere and that a momentum for specific measures would be restored during the next WTO negotiations. In the

meantime, it was important to build the capacity of countries in transition and developing countries to benefit from free trade negotiations and market access. Where trade advanced, poverty receded. Without peace, development was not possible and without development peace was not lasting.

Agenda item 97 (b): Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries (A/58/39 (Supplement), A/58/319, A/58/345 and A/58/204)

7. **Mr. Kasri** (Indonesia) said that the progress made in the implementation of South-South cooperation among developing countries, which was contributing to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, was encouraging. To make full use of the potential for cooperation among developing countries, it was necessary to provide a training and cooperation framework to enable those countries to protect their development interests, contribute more effectively to multilateral processes, and participate in the increasingly competitive world market. In this context, Indonesia welcomed the work of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (SU/TCDC) and hoped that the Unit would carry out more South-South cooperation and strive further to mainstream cooperation into the work of United Nations funds and programmes. To that purpose, donors were encouraged to strengthen the capacity of the Unit.

8. The international debt of developing countries had more than tripled since the Buenos Aires Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (1978). In 2002, developing countries owed about $ 1,250 million. There was therefore an urgent need to formulate new strategies for managing that debt. Since debt financing and development financing were intimately correlated, low-income countries had accumulated debt to an extent that inhibited economic growth and efforts to reduce poverty levels, even though the international community, through the Millennium Development Goals, had committed itself to decreasing poverty faster than in the past. For these reasons, Indonesia encouraged the Special Unit, in close cooperation with the organizations of the United Nations, the Bretton Woods Institutions, the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and other relevant bodies, to explore effective cooperation frameworks for debt management in order to ensure that the economies of developing countries would not be strangled by the debt.

9. On the regional and sub-regional levels, South-South cooperation had made great strides. Interregional cooperation allowed regions to bring a wide variety of knowledge and experience to bear on common issues and problems faced by the vast majority of countries in the South. The Asian-African Sub-Regional Organizations Conference (AASROC), hosted by the Government of Indonesia in Bandung in July 2003, was a case in point. Asia and Africa had agreed to forge a New Strategic Partnership, using their specific strengths to complement each other, overcome common development problems and promote peace, prosperity and progress in both regions. Furthermore, participants in the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III) had urged support for NEPAD and pledged $1 billion in grant aid to Africa over the next five years.

10. The developing countries realized that the full benefits of technical cooperation among developing countries could be achieved only with increased cooperation from international partners, including the United Nations system, international institutions, universities and think tanks, the private sector and other stakeholders. Such partnerships would serve as channels for a wealth of experience to bear on policy decisions and activities implementing TCDC programmes.

11. Indonesia believed that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) should continue to support South-South cooperation and broaden its scope under interregional, regional and country programmes.

12. **Mr. Gandum** (Malaysia), on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA), stressed that the success of South-South cooperation required a collective effort of all development partners and of the entire multilateral system. In view of globalization and a complex international political and economic situation, particularly subsequent to the failure of negotiations at Cancun, South-South cooperation was more compelling than ever. It diversified and expanded the development options of countries in the South, providing them with more interesting partnership opportunities and strengthening them individually and collectively. The

representative welcomed the recent show of solidarity and cohesion among developing countries at Cancun, pointing out that they had emerged as net providers of technical assistance and that some of them currently expended substantial resources in technical assistance to other developing countries and in triangular cooperation. He described various initiatives undertaken by Malaysia in that area.

13. Malaysia supported the annual celebration of a United Nations Day for South-South cooperation, and the proclamation of an International Decade for South-South cooperation.

14. **Mr. Husain** (Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference) believed that the economic fallout of the 11 September 2001 events could have been controlled in the developing countries by enhanced South-South trade and productive activity if some of the lingering institutional, informational and financial barriers had been abolished. These constraints were continuing to prevail despite the efforts of the Group of 77, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations to promote economic and technical cooperation among developing countries.

15. Regarding the proposals contained in the Director-General's Report on raising public awareness of, and support for, South-South cooperation (A/58/345), the Organization of the Islamic Conference supported the annual celebration of a United Nations Day for South-South cooperation, and the proclamation of an International Decade for South-South cooperation.

16. **Mr. Ramadan** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that since the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries in 1978, the situation in that area had evolved considerably. A number of international and regional initiatives had been undertaken, in particular under the declarations of the South Summit, held in Havana in 2000, and of the New Partnership for Africa's development. The Afro-Asian Conference which was held in 2003 in Bandung, Indonesia had given new impetus to tripartite cooperation. The High Level Conference on South-South Cooperation in Marrakech, Morocco on 16-19 December 2003 was expected to offer participants an opportunity to review and evaluate the results of South-South cooperation and the means to implement the South Summit declaration.

17. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya appreciated the support and the participation of donor countries and international and regional financial institutions, as well as the role played by the organizations of the United Nations system, in particular UNDP, and was of the opinion that it was necessary for them to multiply their programmes and activities tangibly on a national, regional and international level in order to support economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. Further, the international community and the international financial institutions should provide financial and technical support.

18. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was actively involved in bilateral and multilateral economic and technical cooperation. It organized conferences and partnerships in the agricultural, industrial, tourist and commercial sectors. It had set up all-purpose banks that participated in financing development projects aimed in particular at building infrastructure and reducing poverty in countries of the South. It had also set up a private investment programme enabling Libyan investors to invest in Africa. It supported the annual celebration of a United Nations Day for South-South cooperation, possibly on 12 September, as an opportunity for various actors to try to consolidate the information base and make it accessible to all parties involved in South-South cooperation and boosting the system of promotion centres. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya also supported the proclamation of an international decade for South-South Cooperation as of 2005.

19. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon) said that that the increase in technical cooperation among developing countries could be ascribed to the trends of regional and sub-regional integration. TCDC covered a wide range of topics but failed to address the issue of debt and debt-sustainability which continued to hinder the efforts of developing countries to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The representative of Lebanon hoped that the pivotal developing countries and the donors would back initiatives in that area.

20. Global South-South monetary and financial cooperation was one TCDC aspect in which Lebanon was engaged: it chaired the Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four developing countries (G-24), which continued to strengthen cooperation among its

members concerning negotiations on monetary and financial issues with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and other bodies. Within the Arab League, the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) coordinated national monetary policies, sought to stabilize exchange rates and promoted investment flows among Arab countries. In 2002, AMF had signed a memorandum of understanding with the World Trade Organization (WTO) with a view to providing to Arab countries capacity-building and technical assistance for trade negotiations.

21. Technical and other assistance by pivotal developing countries in various regions was needed and valued by the recipient developing countries. Lebanon was thankful to the member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council for their ongoing support which ranged from demining to reconstruction and financial assistance. European Union donor countries played an important role in promoting TCDC in the Middle East. For instance, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) aimed at establishing by 2010 a free-trade area encompassing the EU and its Mediterranean partners, including Lebanon.

22. The delegation of Lebanon believed that bilateral cooperation alone could not enhance technical cooperation among developing countries, and that efforts in this area in the years to come should focus on new partnerships between civil society organizations and the private sector.

23. **Mr. Rojas** (Chile) said that his country, which had reached a certain level of development, realized that benefiting from cooperation programmes was becoming increasingly difficult. Chile nevertheless valued its capacity for technical cooperation with other developing countries, in particular through its agency for international development cooperation, which was active mainly in Latin America.

24. Chile believed that fostering TCDC promotion centres, especially on a regional level, was important. The Chilean delegation supported the conclusions of the Report of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (A/58/39), stressing the significance of technical cooperation in the framework of South-South cooperation. Chile favoured triangular cooperation as a means of obtaining resources from developed countries, and Chilean technicians were working in third countries. In fact, Chile had participated in reconstruction projects in Afghanistan.

25. Chile considered development programmes sponsored by international organizations very useful. It appreciated in particular FAO's South-South programme in Central America, in which the Chile participated through its agency for international cooperation for development. Chile had also assisted Iraq in the area of school meals under a WFP-funded reconstruction programme.

26. **Mr. Mirafzal** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that Iran concurred with the analysis offered by the Secretary-General in his report (A/58/345) and with his recommendation for raising public awareness of and support for South-South cooperation. The Iranian delegation supported the annual celebration of a United Nations Day for South-South cooperation, and the proclamation of an International Decade for South-South cooperation. The Decade should provide immediate opportunities to initiate a more action-oriented agenda for South-South cooperation. The High Level Conference on South-South cooperation in Marrakech, Morocco was expected to provide an occasion for advancing toward that objective and also for enhancing international development cooperation aimed at implementing the programme of action of the South Summit held in Havana.

27. The international community should not only set up new and innovative mechanisms to mobilize resources for technical cooperation among developing countries, but also increase its contribution to the funds set up for South-South cooperation. The Iranian delegation hoped that the negative attitude shown by its developed partners regarding participation in the Pledging Conference for United Nations Development Activities did not imply any unwillingness to contribute to those funds. The Pledging Conference was an established intergovernmental mechanism for international cooperation and as such it should be respected as long as it existed.

28. **Mr. Barnwell** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that South-South Cooperation continued to evolve as a strategic mechanism for the implementation of development programmes, especially by facilitating exchanges, among developing counties. Cultural exchanges in particular had been a key part of cooperation and deserved increased attention.

29 CARICOM had always viewed South-South cooperation as a critical aspect of development cooperation, which was necessary for creating an interdependent global economic order. It therefore considered South-South cooperation as a component of the process for setting up an equitable and comprehensive global cooperation system.

30 The efforts made by developing countries to accelerate South-South technical and economic cooperation were encouraging. It was necessary to shift away from ad hoc arrangements to more systematic and long-term strategic initiatives. The Caribbean countries underscored the value of sharing best practices among them and reaffirmed their commitment to seeking additional ways of cooperating with each other.

31 The organizations and programmes of the United Nations should be encouraged to further mainstream their TCDC activities into their policies, structures and programmes. CARICOM members supported the annual celebration of a United Nations Day for South-South cooperation, and the proclamation of an International Decade for South-South cooperation.

Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/58/12)

Agenda item 91: Macroeconomic policy questions (A/58/16, Chapter III)

32 **The Chairman** said that the Report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) on its 43rd session had been referred to the Second Committee. He reminded the delegations that the General Assembly had decided that the Second Committee should include in its work programme a review of the recommendations contained in that report and transmit all pertinent observations to the Fifth Committee before it reviewed the proposed medium-term plan and its revisions. Since the Fifth Committee was expected to discuss that item on 28 October 2003, the observations of the Second Committee should be sent to it before that date.

33 The CPC report contained two chapters that were related to the work of the Second Committee. They concerned agenda item 12 (Report of the Economic and Social Council) and agenda item 91 (Macroeconomic policy questions). The CPC Report recommendations related to agenda item 12 appeared in Chapter III, section B, under the headings "Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005" and "Programme 7 Economic and social affairs" (pp. 89-95 of Report A/58/16). Most of the revisions concerned Programme 7, Subprogramme 4 on sustainable development and Subprogramme 10 on financing for development.

34 **Ms. Disano** (Director, Division for Sustainable Development) approved of the revisions proposed by CPC and its recommendations, because they reflected the follow-up to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the 11th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Under resolution 57/253 of the General Assembly, sustainable development was considered as an essential element of the general framework of United Nations activities, particularly with a view to attaining the development goals set by the international community and especially those contained in the Millennium Declaration. In line with the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the subprogramme stressed in particular the economic, social and environmental mainstreaming of sustainable development, the innovative mechanisms of implementation and the particular needs of Africa and of small developing Island states.

35 **Mr. De Rojas** (Director, Financing for Development Office) pointed out that the "Financing for Development" subprogramme was a new programme of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and would appear for the first time in the next United Nations budget. It had been set up under the Monterey Conference mandate and the General Assembly resolutions requesting the Secretary-General to establish mechanisms responsible for the follow-up to the Conference. He was pleased to note that the CPC was satisfied with the document and had only made some formal changes. He thanked the Committee for having added a paragraph that gave the document greater force.

36 **Mr. Aboutahir** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the group of 77 and China, said that the DESA proposals and the CPC report were in line with the mandates of Johannesburg and the 11th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The adoption of a ten-year programme to monitor the implementation of the Johannesburg Summit was a major decision taken at that session and should be supported.

37 Concerning Subprogramme 10 on financing for development, the representative of Morocco believed

that support for the Secretariat services responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Monterey Consensus were adequately described in the DESA proposals and the CPC report. The group of 77 and China wished to make suggestions intended to improve on the political level the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan. The group of 77 and China had noted that the medium term plan contained no reference to resolution 57/270 B of the General Assembly on the Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, and that the content of that resolution was not reflected in the narrative part of the DESA and CPC documents. The representative suggested that the CPC should recommend in its report (A/58/16) to include in Programme 7, paragraph 7.2, a reference to General Assembly resolution 57/270 B and the legislative mandates under that resolution. He suggested that the same resolution should be mentioned in the narrative part of the general guidelines of the DESA programme.

38. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to the CPC report, section C.3, entitled "Triennial review of the implementation of the in-depth evaluation of global development trends, issues and policies, global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions" (A/58/16, paragraphs 549-551).

39. **Mr. Kinniburgh** (Director, Development Policy and Planning Office) informed the Committee that in 2000 the Office of Internal Oversight Services had conducted an in-depth evaluation of the subprogrammes relating to global development issues with the United Nations Headquarters and Regional Commissions (E/AC.51/2000/2). In early 2003, in keeping with its standard practice, CPC had conducted a triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made following the earlier evaluation. The CPC report had expressed satisfaction with progress on several recommendations, but the Committee had also made some further recommendations regarding the role and dissemination of the World Economic and Social Survey, as reflected in paragraph 550. He assured the Second Committee that those matters were once again under review in the context of the Secretary-General's reform; and that the working relationships among the entities of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (EC-ESA), particularly between the Regional Commissions and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, continued to be strengthened.

40. **Mr. Seth** (Secretary of the Second Committee) proposed, on the basis of what had been said in the meeting, that the Chairman of the Second Committee should send to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee a letter stating that the Second Committee had reviewed the pertinent sections of the CPC report referred to it by the General Assembly and the General Committee, and wished to make two minor changes consisting of adding a reference to the General Assembly resolution 57/270 B on the Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields in the general guidelines of Programme 7, and adding a second reference to the same resolution in chapter 7 of the programme budget.

41. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to approve the Secretary's proposal. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.